

COLUMBUS TRANSPORTATION AND PEDESTRIAN COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
50 WEST GAY STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM B, 1ST FLOOR  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015  
5:00 P.M

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**Present Were:** Carr, Croasmun, Duguid, Simmons, Wood

**Voting Members:**

**Advisory Member:**

**Executive Secretary:** Austin

**Department of Public Service:**

**Division of Infrastructure Management Staff:**

**Division of Traffic Management Staff:**

**Division of Design and Construction:**

**Guest Speakers:** David Shipps, Mike McCann, Elliott Doza, Alex Smith, Patricia Kovacs

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CALL TO ORDER: 5:03 p.m.

Everyone was given a moment to review notes of January 13, 2015.

**MINUTES**

Steve asked for a motion to approve the January 2015 minutes.

Motion to Approve – Duguid

Second – Wood

Motion Carries

Steve thanked Lori for chairing the January meeting.

**Action Items**

No action items

**Old Business**

No items

**New Business**

**Update on Safe Routes to School – Alex Smith and David Shipps**

Steve invited Alex and David to present an update to the district wide school travel plan. This will eventually be given to City Council for approval/recommendation. Alex is the Safe Routes to

School Coordinator for Columbus Public Health. David is with the consultant TranSystems. Here are some acronyms to be familiar with: LDSTP (Large District School Travel Plan) - denotes a district with 24 or more schools; HIA (Health Impact Assessment).

David – It is an interactive movement to promote active transportation. It focuses on barriers and improvements for walking and biking within 2 miles of any school. It includes 5 E's: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation. ODOT oversees the safe routes program. They require a school travel plan is done before future funding requests are made. David is a consultant with ODOT, so he was in charge of putting this together with Alex and other members (some here today). Here are some statistics: in 1969 48% of children used active transportation. That number has declined drastically. Now, 50% of trips to school are 1 mile or less and 80% are made by car. Big things we look for is where the kids are coming from. ODOT requires address data. We find out what travel mode they use by surveying. We also ask **why** – which is gathered from parent surveys (sent to 36,000 parents). Had a 15% return rate. The open ended question at the end was helpful. Our process began in late 2013. There are 94 K-8 schools within the City. The local group consists of members from City, Public Health, MORPC, ODOT, CPD, CCS and others. Did principal surveys as well. Walk audits were conducted at 15 focus schools. Also came up with infrastructure engineering recommendations. Alex – HIA is a study that ensures both health and social equity are considered in the plan. Also, in this case it ensures we are concentrating our efforts in the schools that need the most help. This is the first safe routes project to have an HIA which is something we believe ODOT will look for in the future. We did some perception mapping and another survey to engage parents in another manner -- to bring up unsafe conditions. Tried to separate unsafe and crime, but most parents did not want to separate the two. Still able to produce maps to see where the parents perceive there are issues. The walk audits were performed at 15 focus schools. We took a safe routes approach in the morning by watching the arrival of the students and talked to administrators. In the afternoon we took an HIA approach by talking to parents waiting in cars, etc. and watched dismissal. Main part of HIA was to gather census data – which includes social and health indicators. Took that data and looked at zip codes in Columbus to see which schools were in those zip codes to see the most need. Enrollment and performance were looked into. This HIA is a little different from others. We had a lot of communication. Focus schools – looked at students within 1 mile to see if there was a higher density concentration and how many biked, walked and took the bus. Geographic location was looked into to see that we hit every side of town. Map includes Hilltop, Franklinton, Near East side, South side as well. We captured a lot of the inner city. Other things noticed were the stability of staff and student population. Staff changes somewhat, but student population varies. Students move from school to school as they move homes.

Val asked about charter schools. All schools for this plan are Columbus Public Schools. Some of the schools are in very close proximity to each other.

From parent survey, in-focus schools have much higher rate of walking/biking – 33%. Most is walking. Only 0.25% district wide ride their bikes to school. We have high percentage of walkers. Some students have no other choice. It's important to make it safe for them. Many students are still taken by bus or driven.

Non-Infrastructure: A few initiatives that came out of the plan are mentioned. Education: continue employing a full-time SRTS coordinator and apply for grants. Cultivating the SRTS champion is very important. There is only so much one person can do. Clintonville has 20 volunteers. Some other schools may take a lot of work to get volunteers. It's included into

wellness policy within the curriculum so the program lives on whether there are volunteers or a coordinator. Looking at starting *Walking School Bus* programs which includes adult supervision. Again this program would be volunteer. Establishing monthly bike and walk to school days. We already do this twice a year at some schools. Would like to build on that district wide. It is required for grant applications. Working with non-profit programs like Yay Bikes! where students are taught how to bike safely in the community. Looking at Enforcement there is a Porch Parents Program in Linden. A lot of parent comments complained about snow on sidewalks. Maybe High School / Middle school students could volunteer to help with this for community service credit.

David: Infrastructure: Had over 500 recommendations across the city within 1 mile of each of these schools. On the back of packet there is a map of focus schools and some recommendations.

Bike Facility: MMTP will determine the criteria for each type of roadway. Biggest thing is sidewalks. Recommending new sidewalks and connecting gaps where they do not exist. Other considerations include: bump-outs, marked cross walks, signal analysis, countdown timers. A lot of kids utilize alleys within the focus schools. Alleys can be scary because they are sometimes not marked, signed or lighted. Could we turn them into pedestrian streets? We've talked with staff at the City and the challenges in doing that, but it is a recommendation that we want to look into. Also looking into road diets. Next steps are to finalize the school travel plan. We have been giving multiple presentations around town and getting endorsements. ODOT's application cycle is open so we are working very quickly to get things wrapped up so Alex can apply for \$60,000 for non-infrastructure funding. Also so City staff can decide what they want to do with infrastructure. Alex added that with non-infrastructure it is scaled to the size of the district. \$60,000 is for a large district. It's less for a smaller district.

Val asked if there is funding available through the Health Department for education. They did receive a grant that will help with this. He is going to look for smaller grants also.

HIA was done to prioritize the schools being focused on--looked at employment, median household income, health indicators such as BMI levels and obesity.

Since literature review was already done, it should be able to be used in the future. Physical activity, traffic safety and crime were considered. Crime information was received from CPD.

Kerstin mentioned that it will be a great template to be used by other areas. Columbus is getting the National Safe Routes to School conference in April of 2016. We want to raise the visibility of Safe Routes to School.

Val mentioned that when she was getting out of college they were working on Safe Routes to School. It's amazing to see it come this far.

Patti asked if the recommendations that have an MUTCD component have been studied to see if they are feasible. For example: do the 3 way stop recommendations have studies completed? David commented that it's a planning level document. No, they are general recommendations based on engineering judgment. Patti added that if the studies are completed and it does not meet the MUTCD standards then the City looks bad for not being willing to accommodate. What can we do to this document to make people understand this is a plan, because 5 years from now someone will look at this document and say that there was supposed to be a 3-way stop here? But in reality after it was studied it didn't meet the requirements. The document is not complete yet. There will be tweaks made that state these are planning level recommendations,

which require further engineering judgment to determine their feasibility. Patti suggests in the future a component is added to include the study so we know if it can or can't be a possibility.

This document's purpose is to come up with ideas so communities can apply for funding to determine their validity. Anything that requires a study should be studied. Val suggested "evaluate change in traffic control" could be wording used.

Kevin has a comment that doesn't necessarily pertain to Columbus, but it's more regional. The trend he sees in the rural districts and in many small communities is that they close the small schools and build one in a larger area that no one can walk to. Is there any effort being made to get communities to think beyond – cheaper, large areas of land? Yes, Kerstin commented that a superintendent has commented on this.

Draft language was sent to the state by Safe Routes National, to change what is in the regulations and there is on-going discussion. Inner city schools are sometimes designed for buses, driving and parent drop off, while bike racks etc. are not located in the best places.

#### **Next Generation – COTA: Mike McCann and Elliott Doza**

Elliott Doza is in the planning department of COTA. Next Generation is a long range visionary plan to 2050. We are asking the community "what would you like to see in the future as far as public transit is concerned?". Handed out a comment card and a document that explains why we are doing this and the schedule.

The purpose is to identify public transit needs for the next 35 years. Not bound by mode or constrained by funding. Asking for everyone's opinion whether you are a business leader, resident or someone that doesn't even like public transit. We will evaluate public comments and develop a list of projects, funding and timeline. The end result will be a document that provides all of this information. Will also look at other regional plans, and coordinate with the Multimodal Thoroughfare Plan – Connect Columbus. MORPC is helping them gather information on these other plans.

There are 4 main components. The Advisory Group will include leaders from across the region, business leaders, public leaders, disabled community, other transportation providers for jobs and medical use. Want to include people who are supportive of transit, have no opinion, and those that do not support transit. It's a non-biased approach. This will be completed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016.

Discussion Groups: Want to target those that are harder to reach by traditional means which would include low income groups; those that work different hours; minorities; non-English speaking groups; students—OSU, CCAD, CSCCD, etc. Will hold open public meetings at a community for a day to drop in whenever people would like. Will have a web presence (COTA website), etc. Updates will be posted.

The timeline is broken into 3 phases.

Phase 1: Vision Needs and Opportunities Assessment: We will take data for current region, projections, population, employment and future traffic projections, and what the public wants. From there the consultant will work with the advisory level group to create alternatives.

Phase 2: Define and Evaluate Alternatives: Create an evaluation method (2 tiered). First level will contain a lot of projects and be a qualitative approach. We will weed out non-feasible

comments using professional judgment and the advisory group. Tier 2 will include how many jobs it will create, the cost, timeline, federal funding probability, etc.

Phase 3: Recommendations and Implementation Plan: This phase will also look at funding. This is the final phase.

There are three planning horizons: 2025, 2040 and 2050. We will have a fact book. Funding options are being looked into with public and private partnerships. For instance, Obetz and Groveport are looking at alternative ways to move their residents to Rickenbacker for jobs. Will heavy rail be supported, etc.

Talked to Connect Columbus, and MORPC to coordinate public engagement. Same consultant is working on both plans. Trying to develop a message so people aren't confused about the different long range plans.

Val asked if there will be outreach to Delaware? They do want to talk to them. They are not currently in their service area. In the future it could expand there.

MORPC, COTA and regional providers meet quarterly.

#### **Other Business:**

Patti announced the name for the Multimodal Thoroughfare Plan is **Connect Columbus: Building Columbus' Transportation Future**. A press release will be sent the week of February 22nd. First advisory group meeting will be that week.

Ms. Patricia Kovacs was a guest speaker who wanted to talk about the Summit Plan Traffic Signals.

I know you guys haven't reviewed the change in plans for summit which was discussed at the bike subcommittee a couple weeks ago. I can't come to next T&PC. I like the plan. I think cycle tracks are good for certain applications. I think that the previous plan would be better for that application. I think that one-way bike lanes on Summit and Fourth would have encouraged same direction cycling on the roads, encouraged motorists to merge right before turning right, alleviated the need for bicycle lights and bus islands for bus passengers. Design they had was wide enough to make room for the door zone and 3 feet on traveling traffic and maintenance would be easier and less expensive. Don't like to give negatives, but the cycle tracks will keep cyclist less visible to traveling motorists. When motorists are coming from side streets they will be 20 feet from stop sign to where the travel lane is and will need to inch out into cycle track to see if cars coming. Pedestrian conflicts will be increased. Buses will have to stop in travel lane to discharge and load passengers. The main concern, and why I'm here today is I did a study of traffic crashes by car in 2011 in Columbus and 69% of crashes were at intersections so I'm very concerned about this application. Want to say that I really like the bikeway design – the original design. Traffic lights are being removed on 4<sup>th</sup> and Summit. There will be a mile of gap with no lights on summit and 7/10<sup>th</sup> mile on summit with no crosswalk or signal. Hoping a stop or pedestrian signal will be added. Especially since they will have bicycle accommodations and there are a lot of OSU students in the area. The other 2 are Broad and Westgate on Steele Avenue bike boulevard so either the bike boulevard has to change its route or something needs to be done to allow cyclist to cross Broad. Front and Whittier is on another bike route number 47 or 49 so I hope it will have a 4 way stop. Thank you for listening. Appreciate the opportunity to talk to you guys.

Signal comments were sent to Tricia. Steve comments that the staff will get back with you about whatever they recommend.

Amanda Ford joined the Traffic Management Division to do parking policy. They will work closely with this group. They will do residential parking items. She will begin on Tuesday February 17. We are very excited to have her on board. She will attend the next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Cramer  
Recording Secretary

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Steve Simmons  
Chairperson

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Patricia A. Austin  
Executive Secretary

THIS MEETING WAS RECORDED; RECORDING IS ON FILE  
AT 50 WEST GAY STREET, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215